

**State Personnel Development Grant
Request for Application (RFA)
Deadline April 29, 2022**



The purpose of the Request for Application is to gauge the level of interest, readiness, and commitment of districts in applying for the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. The SPDG is seeking applications from districts interested in participating in the next cohort; thereby receiving professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching in the implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and evidence-based practices. This document is intended to provide an **overview of the project, the intended outcomes, and the application/selection process** so districts can fully and seriously consider this opportunity.

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), awarded through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), assists state education agencies and their partners to improve results for students with disabilities through professional learning and technical assistance to support the implementation of evidence-based practices. This project is a collaborative effort between the Arkansas Department of Education, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Regional Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

Program Specifications

Overview of the Project: The State Personnel Development Grant focuses on a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), which is a multi-component, general education model designed to support students academically and behaviorally. This project is intended for districts to implement, deepen, and sustain a tiered system with a focus on high-leverage and other evidence-based practices.

The SPDG partners with the following to coordinate district services and supports: [American Institutes for Research](#) (AIR), [The Office of Innovation for Education](#) (OIE), [DESE's Office of Educator Effectiveness](#), and [The Center for Exceptional Families](#) (TCFEF).

Participation in the SPDG project provides the district with professional learning and leadership opportunities aligned to the Continuous Inquiry Cycle for Improvement outlined in Arkansas' ESSA Plan. MTSS professional learning and technical assistance aid districts in building sustainable, integrated systems for high-quality instruction and assessment. Supports are customized to address specific needs identified through a review of local data. The collaborative data-based decision-making process between the district and SPDG staff creates a sustainable MTSS framework and increases the knowledge and capacity of educators to improve outcomes for students, especially students with disabilities.

Additionally, the SPDG offers Cognitive Coaching as a way to support the implementation of evidence-based practices through personalized, competency-based

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professional learning that creates an opportunity for educators to “learn by doing”. The professional learning and coaching support allow educators time to learn, reflect, and implement content and strategies to impact professional practice and lead to higher achievement for all students. **SPDG provides stipends to educators who complete professional learning focused on coaching, Universal Design for Learning, and High-Leverage and other evidence-based practices.**

Selected districts and schools will begin in the 2022-2023 school year. The professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching activities will be in effect for the 2022-2025 academic years.

Intended Outcomes: The overarching goals of Arkansas’ State Personnel Development Grant Project, in partnership with stakeholders, are to improve outcomes for students, specifically students with disabilities, by:

- Providing support through professional learning and coaching to increase teacher efficacy with implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports
- Providing professional learning and coaching on implementing and sustaining integrated high-leverage inclusive practices to empower teachers to become more precise in knowing which strategies are most effective for teaching and learning
- Offering educators choice in competency-based professional learning supported by ongoing coaching

SPDG Commitments: The SPDG will support districts’ current initiatives and ongoing work to increase positive outcomes for all students by:

- Providing multi-year training, coaching, and follow-up supports to increase the ability of educators to utilize high-leverage and other evidence-based practices
- Increasing the capacity of leadership and instructional coaches to assist in the implementation and sustainment of a tiered system of supports and evidence-based practices when teaching all students, especially students with disabilities
- Providing personalized learning through micro-credentials to create an opportunity for educators to “learn by doing”
- Differentiating support based on assessment data results, to guide action planning and implementation fidelity

Commitments for Participation

District Commitments: Applicants commit to the following, in conjunction with the district and school improvement process:

- Form or utilize district and school-level leadership teams, with active participation of key leaders, who will:
 - Meet regularly to review district- and school-level data for decision-making purposes

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- Ensure the integration of critical multi-tiered system of supports components in the district and school improvement process
- Identify key district and school personnel committed to participating in SPDG activities
- Ensure key leaders are involved in professional learning, technical assistance, and coaching services provided by the SPDG project
- Prioritize resources to allow ongoing collaboration among instructional coaches, educators, and leadership team members, including opportunities to attend district and building leadership team meetings
- Increase the meaningful engagement and involvement of families/communities in the educational process
- Submit district-, school-, and student-level data for the purposes of the SPDG project evaluation
- Support the participation of identified instructional coaches in professional learning and technical assistance activities including:
 - Participation in 8 days of Cognitive Coaching Foundations Training, at no cost to the district
 - Meet regularly with instructional personnel to support coaching practices

Application Requirements

All applications must address each of the required components below. Utilize the form provided in Attachment 1 for this purpose. Complete all sections of the application. To assist in meeting expectations for fully completed applications, please review the evaluation criteria and scoring in the Application Scoring Summary.

Application:

- A. Demographic Information
- B. Checklist
- C. Narrative Response Questions
- D. Signature Page

Application Review: Applications will be reviewed and evaluated according to the specific evaluation criteria listed below. See the Application Scoring Summary for more detailed information about the specific evaluation criteria and scoring.

- A. Demographic Information: Current schools and grades served within the district as well as student demographic data.
- B. Checklist (8 points): Current district/school implementation practices
- C. Narrative Response Questions (12 points): The application clearly defines the needs that will be addressed through participation in the project and provides convincing evidence that without assistance from the project, these needs would not be met. The application also delineates projected outcomes that: a) are measurable, b) are clearly linked to the identified needs, and c) will result in

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systems change and an increased capacity of the district to effectively implement a multi-tiered system of supports.

- D. Signature Page: Team members completing application listed, district designee identified as well as superintendent's signature.

Eligibility: Selection will be considered on the basis of total points. It is important for diverse districts to be represented in the operation of the SPDG Project. Therefore, after all applications have been evaluated against the criteria delineated above and have received a final score from 0 to 20, additional factors will be considered prior to selection. Applicants will be selected to ensure districts served by the project are diverse with respect to geographic location (north, central, south, east, and west, and rural, urban, suburban), district size (small, medium, large), district type (elementary, intermediate, middle, high school), and grade levels of potential implementation schools (e.g., K-5, 6-8, and 9-12).

Anticipated Awards: It is anticipated that five districts will be selected for the 2022-2023 school year. Final decisions with regard to the selection of participating SPDG districts will be made no later than May 20, 2022. Districts selected for participation will be required to sign a formal agreement with the SPDG to participate in the work services and to fulfill the district commitments delineated herein.

Timeline and Application Deadline:

Activity	Deadline
Interest Application Due	April 29, 2022
Virtual Interviews Conducted	May 9, 2022- May 13, 2022
Final Notification and Commitments	May 20, 2022

Fully completed applications must be received by the SPDG no later than April 29, 2022. Applications can be submitted in Word or PDF format as an email attachment to crystal.bethea@ade.arkansas.gov. The application must be received by 5:00 pm by the due date in order to be considered. The SPDG will send an email verifying receipt of each application. If an applicant does not get an email receipt, please contact Crystal Bethea at the email address provided above.